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ABSTRACT

In an effort to maintain the quality of adult basic education (ABE) instructional personnel, prevent a reduction of emphasis by higher education on responding primarily to ABE interest and needs, and determine directions of the off-campus programs, a questionnaire was sent to 45 higher education institutions in the Southeast which provided graduate level courses for ABE personnel during the 1969-74 period. From the 33 who responded, findings indicated that (1) the majority of the institutions were distinctly oriented toward the master's degree level, (2) the majority of faculty members were located in distinct adult education departments, (3) the majority reported two or less full-time adult education faculty members, and (4) there were five courses that were relatively standard off-campus offerings in the region--introduction to adult education, curriculum development, administration, adult learning and psychology, and methods and materials. The report includes detailed descriptions of study results along with a discussion of efforts which would aid ABE program development and student enrollment. (NL)

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THE NATURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION'S RESPONSE TO ABE STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHEAST, 1969-1974: AN EXAMINATION OF OFF-CAMPUS COURSE ACTIVITY

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PROBLEM

A major and continuing concern of adult basic education (ABE) administrators at federal, state, and local levels has been the quality of part-time instructional personnel. In 1965, when state directors of ABE in six southeastern states (1) began discussions of ways to remedy the early recognized need for pre- and in-service training, they rapidly and quite naturally turned to higher educational institutions in their states for assistance.

It was felt that graduate-level institutions which had been so actively involved in the preparation of professional educators would have a major contribution to make in increasing the competence of ABE teachers and administrative personnel. Participation by higher educational institutions seemed to be especially important because so many teachers and administrative personnel, the vast majority being part-time, would be drawn from elementary and secondary school faculty and supervisory staff. These institutions also would lend important credibility to any pre- or in-service programs and, as a result, motivate part-time staff of ABE programs to enroll in courses and seminars designed to improve their classroom performance.

During the planning period for a comprehensive southeastern regional response to this problem, the need for ABE staff development became clear. Fully 95 per cent of the nearly 8,000 employed teachers and coordinators and six southeastern states had other full-time occupations. Elementary school teachers were recruited to act as evening or after-school instructors; supervisory personnel were drawn from among

department chairmen, assistant principals and coaches, again at the elementary school level.(2)

Dropout and turnover rates among students and faculty in ABE were not carefully tabulated. Best estimates in the first years of ABE operation in the Southeast, 1965-68, were a 70-80% annual dropout of students and a 40-50% turnover rate among teachers.(3) Methods for reporting figures make complete verification of these estimates impossible.

The large early dropout rate could be partially traced to primarily teacher attitudes toward ABE students and how those attitudes influenced instruction.

Attitudes

- Adult learners would be largely uneducable, given their first-time failure in education.
- ABE students would emulate younger public school students in a step-by-step progression through a clearly set out curriculum to master basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics.
- The ABE students would seek to master all the basic skills, not being content with understanding small, but immediately useful items from one or two subject areas, followed by departure from the program.(4)

As a result, in its early stages, ABE was often a slightly remodeled version of the elementary curriculum. The arrangement of the classrooms, material selected and used, teaching styles, and all other factors associated with the ABE environment emphasized a teacher and administrator feeling ABE students

would act and react as young elementary students. Large numbers of the adults left after one or two sessions. Those concerned with this rapid turnover, at all levels of ABE administration, recognized that the personnel in programs must make an emotional and intellectual transition to working with adults.(5)

Since the majority of ABE teaching personnel were part-time, pre- and in-service training for them had to be presented in a form and at locations which were appealing and accessible. As part of a regional response, higher educational institutions were provided with federal funds to provide the core of instructional service to ABE teachers and administrators. There were two requirements for participation:

1. At least two institutions of higher learning in each state provided pre- and in-service adult and basic education training through courses and graduate degree programs. An important phase of this training was the extensive off-campus work done by faculty members, visiting (ABE) programs and providing courses within driving distance of potential students (generally ABE personnel, initially).
2. A continuing consultant activity enabled college and university faculty to assist local ABE programs through regular visits and, equally important, provided opportunities for them to become familiar with everyday problems faced by staff. <u>This first-hand knowledge would lead to the inclusion of more meaningful and relevant experiences in the adult education curriculum</u>.(6)

As the size of the ABE instructional staff grew, there was an increase in the number of higher educational institutions involved increased. The total number of colleges and universities which were offering graduate courses in adult education in 1974 had increased to 25, as compared with three in 1969 when the involvement of institutions in the Southeast began.

While higher education participation of their response which ABE administrative leadership at the federal, state, and regionl levels reported through informal interviews and reactions:

1. Outreach might be restricted to traditional campus credit courses, which would be more theoretical than practical.
2. Faculty members, newly appointed at many institutions (indeed, recent recipients of their doctoral degrees, in many instances), might be as interested in sinking roots, establishing competence, and demonstrating worth as responding to the needs of ABE staff personnel.
3. Faculty members might increasingly demonstrate a desire to move from a primary emphasis on ABE to one dealing with general adult education and appealing to a wider-than-teacher clientele. (7)

All of the above are tendencies which could reduce the emphasis on responding to primarily ABE interest and needs.

Population and Methodology

In an effort to determine directions of the off-campus programs, all of the higher education institutions which provided graduate level courses for ABE personnel during the 1969-1974 period were sent a questionnaire

related to the off-campus courses which they offered to ABE personnel. Because of some faculty changes, those with present and past institutional affiliation were sent the questionnaires. There were 34 questionnaires or statements returned from 45 sent. The responses are summarized in the following sections, with the implications of these responses addressed subsequently.

Findings

At the start of the Southeastern regional effort to increase higher education in ABE staff development, only three institutions had graduate programs. Two were well established and nationally recognized, having been in operation for nearly 20 years. The third was established in the mid 1960's with support from the university system where it was a leading institution and the state department of education which looked on it to take a leading role in adult education staff development. Each of the three programs were housed in separate adult education departments within colleges of education; master's and doctoral level degrees were available.

Of the 33 who provided complete answers, including those from the three established institutions, the majority were distinctly oriented toward the master's level.

1. Twenty (20) offered an M.Ed.;
2. Eight (8) offered an M.A.;
3. Seven (7) offered an Ed.D.;
4. Five (5) offered six-year certificates; and
5. One (1) offered a Ph.D.

Only five of those who responded reported that the institution did not offer any degree program in adult education.

Consistent with organizational arrangements reported in the 1967 study by Clive Veri the majority of faculty members were located in distinct adult education departments or those with clear affiliation to adult or continuing education.

1. Seventeen (17) indicated that an "adult education" department had been their permanent academic location in the 1969-74 period or the portion of that period when they had been at the institution;
2. Four (4) reported that their department was higher and continuing education;
3. Three (3) were in curriculum department; and
4. Two (2) faculty members, each, were in departments of adult basic education, continuing education, and vocational education, respectively.

Contrary to the average number of full-time faculty estimated at three and one-half in the study by Clive Veri a majority of the respondents group reported two or less faculty members on full-time adult education appointments.

1. Within seven (7) of the institutions, there were no full-time faculty members;
2. Six (6) institutions had one (1) full-time faculty member;
3. Seven (7) institutions had two (2) full-time faculty members;
4. Four (4) institutions had three (3) full-time faculty members; and
5. Two (2) had thirteen (13) or more.

In addition, the number of part-time faculty members was between one (1) and three (3) in the majority of the institutions.

1. Seven (7) institutions reported two (2) part-time faculty members;
2. Six (6) reported there were none during the 1969-74 period;
3. Five (5) reported one (1) part-time appointment;
4. An additional five (5) reported three (3) part-time appointments; and
5. Two (2) reported five (5) part-time and one (1) reported four (4) in this category.

A 1973 survey of adult education graduate programs reported that the average number of full-time equivalent faculty members was 2.3 for new programs. This suggests that the majority of new programs in the Southeast began with less than the national average of faculty members for adult education graduate programs. In addition many programs began with a heavy reliance on one faculty member and several part-time or adjunct faculty members.

Seventeen (17) reported that the adjunct faculty members were drawn from among adult and adult basic education practitioners largely. Eleven (11) did not use adjunct personnel at all. The backgrounds of the adjunct faculty members were quite diverse, after counting the adult education practitioner group (8 of 17). Administrators (three institutions) and counselors (two) were the only groups mentioned more than once.

An early concern in the development of the Southeast's regional project was easy access to credit courses in all states. One common method to insure uniform access was to divide each state into geographic service

areas and request one college or university assume responsibility for graduate course offerings there. There was some disagreement among respondents within the same states, as to whether service areas did exist. Twenty (20) of the thirty-three (33) respondents said they had responsibility for a specific region of their state. The majority of service areas were outlined principally for ABE, with less definition in other areas of adult education. There was wide differentiation in the number of counties, with no clustering in the average number. The smallest number of counties served was four (4) and the largest, one-hundred (100), with that latter including responsibility for the bulk of adult education activity in the state.

Courses Offered

The sequence of offerings generally took an ABE orientation and, in the intent of the regional effort, were to provide basic orientation to theory and practice for teaching and administrative personnel who worked part-time in ABE programs. There were five courses that were relatively standard off-campus offerings in the region:

Introduction to adult education or adult basic eduation.

Curriculum development in adult education or adult basic education.

Administration of adult education or adult basic education.

Adult learning and psychology.

Methods and materials in adult basic education.

There was an indication in less than half of the responses that faculty members wanted to balance the ABE emphasis with one which treated

the whole field of adult and continuing education in general. The preponderance of ABE-oriented personnel in the courses led to an emphasis on their concerns, in the majority of cases. On-campus programs, however, may well have taken a different direction.

Twenty-seven (27) of the replies indicated the introductory course had been presented at least once during the 1969-1974 period.

Ten (10) indicated it had been done ten (10) times or more.

Twelve (12) said the course was available one (1) to five (5) times.

Five (5) indicated six (6) to nine (9) times

Fifteen (15) of the respondents indicated class size was from eleven to fifteen (11 to 15) students, with the remaining responses reporting:

Seven (7) - sixteen to twenty (16-20) students;

Four (4) - twenty-one to twenty-five (21-25) students;

Two (2) - six to ten (6-10) students; and

Two (2) - over twenty-five (25) students.

The curriculum development course was the second most frequent offering, one or more times according to twenty-one (21) faculty respondents.

Fifteen (15) indicated the course had been offered one (1) to five (5) times;

Six (6) reported ten (10) or more occasions; and

Five (5) reported six (6) to nine (9) times.

Ten (10) of the respondents reported sixteen (16) to twenty (20) students, and nine (9), eleven (11) to fifteen (15) students. The remaining:

Four (4), over twenty-five (25);

Two (2), six (6) to ten (10); and

One (1), twenty one (21) to twenty-five (25).

Third in frequency, was adult learning and psychology, offered at least once by twenty seven (27) of the respondents.

Eleven (11) offered the course one (1) to five (5) times;

Ten (10) offered the course ten (10) or more times; and

Six (6) offered the course six (6) to nine (9) times.

There was greater diversity in the number of students in the courses.

Nine (9) had eleven (11) to fifteen (15) students;

Eight (8) had sixteen (16) to twenty students;

Five (5) had twenty-one (21) to twenty-five (25) students;

Three (3) had six (6) to ten (10) students; and

Two (2) had over twenty-five (25) students.

Next in frequency was administration of adult or adult basic education, with twenty-three (23) respondents who reported one or more times. Seventeen (17) offered the course one (1) to five (5) times during the period. The remaining reported:

Four (4) offered the course six (6) to nine (9) times; and

Three (3) offered the course ten (10) or more times.

Student numbers were similar to the other courses;

Fifteen (15) had eleven (11) to fifteen (15) students;

Three (3) had six (6) to ten (10) students;

Three (3) had sixteen (16) to twenty (20) students;

Two (2) had twenty-one (21) to twenty-five (25) students; and

One (1) had over twenty-five (25) students.

The methods and materials course was offered least frequently in sixteen instances.

Seven (7) faculty members conducted the course one (1) to five (5) times;

Five (5) offered the course six (6) to nine (9) times; and

Four (4) offered the course ten (10) or more times.

There was also a great diversity in the number of students per class.

Five (5) has six (6) to ten (10) students;

Four (4) has sixteen (16) to twenty (20) students;

Three (3) had eleven (11) to fifteen (15) students;

Two (2), had twenty-one (21) to twenty-five (25) students; and

Two (2) had over twenty-five students.

Participant Statistics

The principal intent of rapid expansion of graduate programs in adult education was to provid easily accessible courses to teachers and administrators of ABE programs. Percentage distributions do reveal a heavy concentration of teachers, but wide variety of other professional educators, as well.

	Percentage					
Group	0-9	10-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	50+
Teachers	4	9	3		2	12
Administrators	9	13	2	1		1
WIN[2]	8					
Church Women United	6					
SDE[3]	13	1				
Community College Staff	5	8	1			2
Vo-Tech Staff	10	6	1		1	
Learning Lab Staff	17	1				
Extension			4			

1. Number in each column indicates the total.
2. Work Incentive Program (ABE oriented).
3. State Department of Education.

These distributions reflect the departure taken in the Southeast in contrast with many adult and continuing education graduate programs which concentrate on the preparation of administrators. Indeed, the three previously established Southeastern programs clearly emphasized preparation of administrators.

The Approval and Course Development Process

Federal officials and state directors of adult education in the Southeast considered institutional support critical to rapid course and program development. Speed in response was emphasized because of the unusually large ABE student and staff turnover. Both federal and

state officials felt credit courses were essential to improved performance of ABE teaching personnel. They also wanted to assure permanency of higher education involvement and felt this was best achieved through clear support of vice presidents, deans, and department chairmen. Twenty-two (22) of the respondents reported no institutional restrictions on new course development during the 1969-74 period. The approval process followed the route which generally included:

Dean of the graduate college	13 respondents
Dean of the college of education	11 respondents
Department chairman	9 respondents

Others who participated in course approval were:

Graduate council	7 respondents
Curriculum committee	5 respondents
Vice president for instruction (or comparable chief institutional officer)	3 respondents
Faculty senate	2 respondents

The ease of approval indicated by the majority of respondents is in contrast with the implied difficulty reported by the 1973 AEA study. The relatively large number of courses that were offered off-campus by many institutions as early as 1969 indicated that the normally lengthy approval process was shortened significantly in the Southeast. Courses were approved with ease. Program approval leading to graduate degrees, principally at the MA level, moved more slowly.

The courses were about evenly balanced between extension and residence credit.

	0-50% Of courses	Over 50% Of courses
Extension	18	9
Residence	14	16

Courses were predominantly off-campus versus on-campus in orientation, in that they were directed largely to a practitioner audience. Seventeen (17) of those who responded indicated that none of the courses were offered on-campus and then taken off-campus. In a few instances, the procedure was reversed, and courses were taught on before off-campus. The courses and number of occasions involved were:

Adult learning and development - four (4) respondents

Introduction to adult education or ABE - three (3) respondents

Curriculum and materials - two (2) respondents

The location of off-campus courses were based in part on considerations of involvement and need. Decisions regarding locations utilized the following criteria, according to faculty responses:

Obvious need and demand - twelve (12) responses

Facilities and location - six (6) responses

Proximity to a graduate center - two (2) responses

Ability to recruit students - two (2) responses

The types of individuals who participated in the decision-making were:

Local program directors - eleven (11) responses

Local program directors with the university instructor - nine (9) responses

Public school administrators - five (5) responses

State department of education staff - three (3) responses

Local teachers - three (3) responses

The development of individual course and the total graduate program was facilitated by four types of faculty involvement: working with state department of education (SDE) personnel; acting as a consultant or resource person at in-service seminars and workshops; visiting ABE classes to meet teachers and observe their activities, as a way of identifying needs and concerns to be addressed in the graduate courses; and attending conferences of ABE practitioners in each state. The following table indicates how valuable the respondents believed each of these types of activities to be.

	Degree of Helpfulness[1]		
Activity	Not Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful
With SDE	12	10	8
Through In-service	1	13	15
By Visiting Classes	6	12	10
Attending Conferences	4	15	9

[1]Number in each column indicates number of faculty responses.

Although most of the foregoing responses were in the "helpful" range, certain of the "not helpful" and "very helpful" reactions should be noted:

- Twelve (12) respondents indicated working with SDE personnel was not helpful versus
  Eight (8) who thought the opposite.
- Fifteen (15) respondents felt inservice participation was very helpful.
- Ten (10) respondents felt class visitation was very helpful versus six (6) respondents who did not.

Twelve (12) respondents felt that prior contact with students was a valuable aid in course development; this contact focused faculty member attention on student needs and led to necessary course revisions designed to better meet needs, Eight (8) reported some value from the contact and six (6) indicated little or no value.

The foregoing responses indicate a strain between involvement with practitioners, SDE personnel, teachers in class, and traditional faculty member tendency toward resident instruction and research. This strain, as shown in the 1973 AEA study and may be responsible for the "middle-of-the-road" positions shown by faculty responses.

The Nature of the Off-Campus Courses

An effort to increase the practitioner orientation of off-campus courses might be expected to have an effect on the level of difficulty, delivery format, evaluation criteria, and meeting times of the courses. Each of these areas was investigated through the survey questionnaire.

Faculty members were asked to compare off-campus with on-campus courses along three dimensions. The following table summarizes those responses.

Element	Easier than On-Campus	Harder than On-Campus	Same as On-Campus
Level of Difficulty	6	3	20
Reading Assignments	11	4	14
Written Assignments	8	4	17

The preponderant faculty member feeling emphasized that there was not difference in the overall level of difficulty or written assignments, with some limited difference in reading assignments.

Delivery format is also related to responsiveness to ABE practitioner concerns. The following table presents percentage distributions for the various classroom methods.

No. of Respondents Using Per Class Sessions Method in Each % Group

Method	0-10	11-20	21-40	41-60	61 plus
Lecture		15	10	4	2
Discussion		6	20	2	2
Student Presentation	12	19	6		
Material Exam.	6	18	2		
Discuss Student Problems	12	18	4		
Media	11	12	1		

Responses suggest efforts to balance methods, with a clear avoidance of the lecture method alone, in most cases. Class discussion was the only activity which appeared to occupy over one third of class time, according to the majority of the respondents. That would seem to signify an interest in maximum involvement of students in class activities, as well as sound adult education practice.

There was a similar variation among the methods used to evaluate student performance. The following table indicated the variety of methods used.

Method	No. of Respondents Using Method in Each % Group				
	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41 plus
Tests-Objective	2	5	2	3	2
Tests Essay	2	11	6	1	
Papers	5	16	4		4
Class Reports	8	7	1		
Book Reviews	14	2	2		
Class Discussion	13	7	5		1
Projects	1	2			1
Fieldwork	8				
Practicum	2	1			

The respondents indicated a great deal of consideration was given to performance on essay-type assignments and class-work.

Respondents also reported an interest in scheduling courses at times convenient to ABE practitioners. Evening meetings were most convenient on the following days each week: Wednesday, Tuesday and Thursday (for split sessions), Monday, Friday, and Saturday, in that order. Next in frequency were the late afternoons of Wednesday, Monday, Thursday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday. Least popular was the Saturday morning period.

Assessments of Effect

This aspect of the off-campus courses was examined from three perspectives: enrollment rise or decline during the 1969-74 period and factors which contributed to enrollment increases; estimates of the effects of course enrollment on teachers or administrators who were enrolled in

courses and ABE, in general; and effect on faculty member attitude related to professional performance.

The following table indicates enrollment rises and declines during the 1969-74 period.

Percentage Group	Number Reporting Increase	Number Reporting Decrease
0-20	1	1
21-40	6	0
41-60	1	0
61-80	2	0
81-100	8	2
Over 100	5	

Twenty-three (23) of the respondents indicated some increase in student numbers and fifteen (15) reported rises of more than 50%.

Contributors to that enrollment increase were seen to be:

- o Acceptance and awareness of ABE as a needed area of educational effort - 8 respondents
- o Location of classes - 7 respondents
- o Time and availability of classes - 7 respondents
- o Communication with public school systems - 5 respondents
- o Topics and the quality of instruction - 5 respondents
- o SDE support - 4 respondents
- o Faculty quality - 4 respondents
- o Adult and ABE professionalism - 3 respondents.

The respondents reported that those enrolled in the off-campus courses benefited in the following ways:

Teacher Classroom performance increased significantly as did the demonstrated level of professionalism in understanding of adult education and ABE.

Administrators became more concerned and aware of problems related to the operation of ABE programs. Their professionalism also increased.

Two other aspects of ABE also improved:

Material Development, especially selection, production and recognition of items available.

Recruitment and Retention of ABE students increased as personnel became more sensitive to prospective and actual students.

There was a limited response to faculty-derived benefits. Those respondents who mentioned some impact on their performance listed only two specific points. One was greater reality in on-campus courses, by being able to illustrate theoretical points with concrete examples - obtained from practitioners. A second was an increase in the number of professional contacts they had in the state. The off-campus involvement appeared to have little impact on research, planned or conducted.

REFERENCES

1. There were originally six stated: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Kentucky and North Carolina joined the project one year after its inception.

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